



The Charleston Grade School Class of 1918. Jessie Armstrong, teacher. Pictured are, bottom: ElVoy Wagstaff. Second row, Reed Edwards, Roger Allen, Wallace Casper and Clifford Ritchie. Third row, Dora Wright, Blanche Widdison, Rhea Daybell, Horace Ritchie, Verda Daybell and Valeria Casper. Top row, Lorna Simmons, Theora Edwards, Clara Forman, Zella Winterton and Leland Casper. Jessie Armstrong, teacher, is in the rear.

son, Dr. Frank M. Whiting, professor of speech and theatre arts at the University of Minnesota. In this book, Dr. Whiting recorded the following:

I have always imagined that the great holiday spirit in which plays were performed was somehow related to the spirit with which my own home town celebrated the Fourth of July in the days before automobiles, oiled roads and radio made such celebrations too troublesome and old-fashioned. I realize that my memory has surrounded the whole experience with a halo, for it now seems that the weather was always perfect, and that the valley with its river and background of mountains assumed a special beauty in honor of the occasion. There were weeks of planning and preparation. Then came the great day itself, which began officially at sunrise with cannonading. First came the parade with the grand marshal riding with such dignity that it was hard to believe that he (like everyone else) was one of our neighbors. Then came the mounted color guard followed by the band—not a hired band or a truck wired to play phonograph records—but a band led by the school principal and made up of farmers, ranchers, local merchants, and others who somehow, in addition to all their regular work, had found time to practice at tooting a brass horn or thumping a drum. There were clowns also, and, of course,

gether for entertainment and relaxation. They had their shows and plays, but it wasn't until a tragic accident struck the area that the blessing of good drama was realized.

When young Cory Hanks was blinded and lost his hands at the age of 21 he entered a period of bitterness and despair. But a speech teacher came to tutor him and help him rebuild his life as a writer and lecturer. During her stay, the tutor, Winifred Slaughter, consented to direct some plays for the community. From her theatrical training came many valuable tips on staging, make-up and professional touches that budding actors in the community needed.

John Simmons, one of the young actors in this group, took advantage of the training and directed hundreds of plays afterward for the Home Dramatic's Group. This enthusiastic actor-director would literally live the roles himself in guiding actors in the proper interpretation. He particularly favored the old melodramatic plays, and after exhausting rehearsals when everyone else seemed worn out and nearly ready to quit, he would take a seat in the audience and boo and hiss the villain or shed a tear for the heroine as though he were seeing the play for the first time.

Many of the Simmons plays were built around a cast of seasoned actors in the community, but he always had a few roles or minor parts for new talent whom he wished to train. And the prettiest, current school Ma'am was often placed in the starring role, too.

There was a different atmosphere to the theatre, however, when Dave Thacker decided to do a play. He loved the "westerns" of the day and the more rowdy, rootin', tootin', shootin' the show the better. Within his own talented family he could usually fill a cast, including Ray, Angus (Pud), Bell, Eva, and his daughters LaPreal and Ida.

Later the Whiting family added their talent to the Charleston scene. They presented some full length plays, but generally Wayne, Nellie, Frank and Hanna Whiting produced one act plays, programs and original skits, always with special scenic effects which they were unique at producing.

A special touch to the Charleston plays were the handbills. Even though everyone knew everyone else, it seemed very impressive to see the names in print on the pink, yellow, blue or green handbills fresh from the Wave printing office. Some of the names found most often on the handbills included Dave Thacker, Edith Turner, Fred Price, Wayne Whiting, Niff Watson, Bell Thacker, Florence Price, Ray Thacker and Hanna Whiting.

One of the challenging changes that faced Charleston residents came in the Spring of 1948 when dairymen of the community were informed that the Salt Lake Board of Health intended to cancel their permits for the shipment and sale of milk in the Salt Lake area unless they secured a new source of culinary water.

Since pioneer times the families in the community had used wells that varied in depth from about 15 to 40 feet, and had always considered